

CANDIDATE INFORMATION HANDBOOK

FUNERAL DIRECTOR



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CEMETERY AND FUNERAL BUREAU

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE EXAMINATION

Prior to receiving a funeral director license or assuming the duties of funeral establishment manager in the State of California, candidates are required to successfully pass a written examination. The primary purpose of the examination is to help ensure public health and safety by assessing the candidate's ability to apply California health and safety laws, as well as other relevant laws and regulations, to the major duty areas of funeral director practice.

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

California Business and Professions Code Section 7615 describes the practice of a funeral director as follows:

A funeral director is a person engaged in or conducting, or holding himself or herself out as engaged in any of the following:

- (a) Preparing for the transportation or burial or disposal, or directing and supervising for transportation or burial or disposal of human remains.
- (b) Maintaining an establishment for the preparation for the transportation or disposition or for the care of human remains.
- (c) Using, in connection with his or her name, the words "funeral director," or "undertaker," or "mortician," or any other title implying that he or she is engaged as a funeral director.

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT

The examination is developed and maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs (Department), Office of Examination Resources (OER). The individual test items are written by licensed funeral directors under the guidance of OER analysts.

CHAPTER 2. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Within 7 days of receipt, the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau will notify the applicant in writing regarding the status of his or her application. If the application is incomplete, the letter will specify what additional information the applicant must provide. Within 60 days after the application is deemed complete, the Bureau will notify the applicant if he or she meets the requirements for candidacy and is eligible to sit for the examination.

ABANDONMENT OF APPLICATION

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations Section 1254, the Bureau considers an application abandoned if a candidate fails to take the examination within 1 year after being notified of eligibility. Failure to appear at a scheduled examination without prior notice is also considered abandonment. In the event of abandonment, a candidate must submit a new application with the required fee and meet all requirements at the time of filing. Application fees are not reimbursed when an application is abandoned.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

All examination locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Bureau grants requests for special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Please contact the Bureau to request a packet for examination accommodations. In order to receive consideration, any request must specify the accommodation desired and must be accompanied by a letter from an appropriately licensed professional that confirms the disability and supports the usefulness of the accommodation. The completed packet and substantiating documentation must be submitted 30 days before the examination.

CHAPTER 3. PREPARATION FOR THE EXAMINATION

OVERVIEW

The funeral director examination is based upon a test plan developed by licensed funeral directors. The plan identifies aspects of practice related to the tasks that a funeral director must be able to perform at licensure. The examination contains 100 multiple-choice items from major job duty areas, and it has a time limit of 2 hours.

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR DUTY AREAS

The funeral director examination covers four major duty areas that define the scope of knowledge necessary for safe and effective practice. Each of the major duty areas, weighted on the examination in terms of its importance in practice, is described below.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS (62%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to arrange, plan, and carry out client's disposition needs.

II. PRENEED (17%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to assist clients in arranging final disposition in advance of need.

III. NOTIFICATION, TRANSPORTATION, and FORWARDING (6%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to determine the need to notify the authorities when required and apply laws and regulations pertaining to the transportation and shipment of human remains.

IV. ADMINISTRATION (15%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to obtain required legal documentation for disposition, maintain records and documents according to laws and regulations, and maintain facilities and equipment as necessary.

EXAMINATION OUTLINE

The examination outline identifies the knowledge required to demonstrate acceptable competence in each of the major content areas. Content areas specify practical knowledge, with references to statutes and provisions of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, the California Health and Safety Code, and the Business and Professions Code. Candidates should acquire the knowledge that the outline describes before attempting the examination.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT (62%)		
<i>DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to arrange, plan, and carry out client's disposition needs.</i>		
DISPOSITION CONTROL (15%)	Determine person(s) who have right to control disposition of human remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to person(s) having the right to control disposition of human remains. • Knowledge of procedures to determine legal next of kin.
	Obtain authorization for embalming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to person(s) having the right to control disposition of human remains. • Knowledge of laws for authorization to embalm.
	Obtain release documents from person who has the right to control disposition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to person(s) having the right to control disposition of human remains. • Knowledge of requirements regarding order to release.
	Obtain authorization of cremation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to persons(s) having the right to control disposition of human remains. • Knowledge of laws for authorization to cremate.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT (CONTINUED)		
CONTRACTS/ DISCLOSURES (16%)	Disclose prices of funeral goods and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of General Price List (GPL). • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of Casket Price List (CPL). • Knowledge of consumer disclosures pertaining to goods and services. • Knowledge of laws regarding cash advance items.
	Explain itemization of costs of the funeral service contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of GPL. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of CPL. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to content of funeral service contracts. • Knowledge of laws regarding cash advance items. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to nondeclinable fees.
	Explain required consumer disclosures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of GPL. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of CPL. • Knowledge of consumer disclosures pertaining to goods and services. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure of sealing devices on caskets. • Knowledge of alternative burial/cremation containers. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disclosure rental casket information. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to outer burial container price list.
	Determine need for cash advance items to be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws regarding cash advance items.
	Explain cemetery charges or costs that are included in the funeral contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of different types of outer burial containers. • Knowledge of laws regarding cash advance items.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT (CONTINUED)		
CREMATION (9%)	Explain legal requirements of cremation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of laws pertaining to person(s) having the right to control disposition of human remains.• Knowledge of state laws pertaining to the legal definition of cremation and processing of human remains.
	Provide basic information about the cremation process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of state laws pertaining to the legal definition of cremation and processing of human remains.• Knowledge of hazards associated with mechanical devices or other implants.
	Gather information regarding mechanical devices or other implants that should be removed prior to cremation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of hazards associated with mechanical devices or other implants.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT (CONTINUED)		
SERVICE/ MERCHANDISE (13%)	Explain alternatives or options for funeral/memorial services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of different types of funeral/memorial services. • Knowledge of effects of religious or cultural customs on funeral/memorial services and practices.
	Determine need for services and service items to be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of different types of funeral/memorial services. • Knowledge of effects of religious or cultural customs on funeral/memorial services and practices.
	Determine need for merchandise items to be provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of different types of caskets. • Knowledge of alternative burial/cremation containers. • Knowledge of different types of shipping containers. • Knowledge of different types of outer burial containers.
	Provide basic information about the embalming process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of state laws pertaining to the legal definition of embalming. • Knowledge of possible complications that can arise from physical condition of human remains.
	Gather information regarding the physical condition, appearance, and size of the human remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to gather information about desired physical appearance of human remains. • Knowledge of possible complications that can arise from physical condition of human remains.

I. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT (CONTINUED)		
DISPOSITION (9%)	Explain requirements for disposition of cremated human remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disposition of cremated human remains. • Knowledge of requirements for disposition of cremated human remains.
	Explain requirements for disposition of noncremated human remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of requirements for disposition of noncremated human remains. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to the donation of anatomical gifts. • Knowledge of procedures for shipping human remains. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to disinterment.
	Explain options or alternatives for interment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of types of interment. • Knowledge of procedures for interment of human remains.

II. PRENEED (17%)		
<i>DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to assist clients in arranging final disposition in advance of need.</i>		
PRENEED ADMINISTRATION (6%)	Explain how preneed funds are disbursed at time of need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts.
	Explain how preneed funds received from consumer are held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of legal requirements for irrevocable preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of preneed funding methods. • Knowledge of laws governing preneed trust administration.
	Maintain records of preneed funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of preneed funding methods. • Knowledge of laws governing preneed trust administration.

II. PRENEED (CONTINUED)		
TERMS AND CONDITIONS (11%)	Explain terms of preneed arrangement per preneed contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of conditions included in guaranteed preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of contractual obligations of a funded preneed arrangement. • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts. • Knowledge of conditions included in nonguaranteed preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of legal requirements for irrevocable preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of laws governing preneed trust administration.
	Explain differences between guaranteed and nonguaranteed preneed arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of conditions included in guaranteed preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of conditions included in nonguaranteed preneed arrangements.
	Explain difference between unfunded and funded preneed arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of contractual obligations of a funded preneed arrangement. • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts.
	Explain difference between revocable and irrevocable preneed arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts. • Knowledge of legal requirements for irrevocable preneed arrangements.
	Establish legal terms of preneed contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of conditions included in guaranteed preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts. • Knowledge of conditions included in nonguaranteed preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of legal requirements for irrevocable preneed arrangements. • Knowledge of requirements to establish preneed trust funds.
	Explain self-funded preneed arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of terms and conditions of preneed contracts. • Knowledge of preneed funding methods.

III. NOTIFICATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND FORWARDING (6%)	
<i>DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to determine the need to notify the authorities when required and apply laws and regulations pertaining to the transportation and shipment of human remains.</i>	
Determine need to notify coroner regarding circumstances requiring further investigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of causes of death that must be reported to the coroner. • Knowledge of specific physical conditions that warrant coroner review.
Forward human remains from funeral home to another service provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of health and safety codes pertaining to handling of human remains. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to shipment of human remains. • Knowledge of health and safety codes for transporting human remains. • Knowledge of requirements pertaining to forwarding /receiving human remains.
Transfer human remains from place of death to state-approved facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of health and safety codes pertaining to handling of human remains. • Knowledge of health and safety codes for transporting human remains.
Determine need to notify health officials regarding reportable communicable diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of communicable diseases that must be reported to health officials.

IV. ADMINISTRATION (15%)		
<i>DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to obtain required legal documentation for disposition, maintain records and documents according to laws and regulations, and maintain facilities and equipment as necessary.</i>		
PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES (5%)	Obtain permits for disposition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to obtain permits for disposition. • Knowledge of methods to obtain permits for disinterment.
	File death certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures for preparing and filing death certificates.
FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE (4%)	Maintain physical condition of funeral establishment as required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of requirements regarding maintenance and sanitation of funeral establishment. • Knowledge of physical requirements of funeral establishment, preparation room, and cold storage.
	Maintain physical condition of equipment and vehicles used for the care, preparation, and transportation of human remains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of physical requirements of funeral establishment, preparation room, and cold storage. • Knowledge of requirements for disinfection and sanitation of equipment, vehicles, preparation areas, and storage areas.
RECORD KEEPING (6%)	Maintain serviced files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to maintaining records of goods and services. • Knowledge of contents of serviced files that can be reviewed during a state inspection.
	Maintain historical records of price lists and funeral contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to retention of price lists and funeral contracts that can be reviewed during a state inspection. • Knowledge of laws pertaining to maintaining records of goods and services.
	Determine need to notify coroner regarding unclaimed dead.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws pertaining to unclaimed dead.

CHAPTER 4. DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

REQUISITE MATERIALS FOR ADMITTANCE

Candidates must report to the registration area at the time and date specified on the Notice of Admittance for the examination. The proctors will collect the Notice of Admittance and ask to see official photographic identification. Candidates who do not bring the Notice of Admittance and appropriate photographic identification will **NOT** be allowed to participate in the examination.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Candidates should be prepared to turn off pagers and cell phones and place handbags, briefcases, and other such personal belongings away from the examination table. The proctors will provide instructions regarding registration, seat assignments, completion of examination materials, and other steps in the examination process.

Section 123 of the Business and Professions Code prohibits any person who takes the examination from engaging in any conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of a licensing examination. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, obstructing the standardized administration of the examination, removing of examination materials from the examination room, communicating examination information to another person, copying answers from another person, using unauthorized books, equipment, notes, or other printed materials during the examination, and permitting an impersonator to take the examination. (The full text of Section 123 is provided in Appendix A). Violation of Section 123 will result in disqualification from the examination and possible denial of a license.

CHAPTER 5. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

PASSING SCORE

Examinations often vary in difficulty depending on the form of the examination administered. For this reason, the passing score is determined using a criterion-referenced method rather than a set score or percentage. Applying the criterion-referenced method, the difficulty of each item on the examination is evaluated relative to the minimum competence standard for safe practice. As a result, the passing score is lower for difficult examinations, and is higher for easier examinations, providing a safeguard to both the candidate and the public.

RELEASE OF RESULTS

The Bureau will notify candidates of examination results within 21 to 35 days of the scheduled examination date. If results are not received within 35 days of the examination date, submit a written request to the Bureau for a duplicate copy of your results.

Examination results will not be released by telephone.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Applicants and candidates must notify the Bureau in writing of any change of address. Allow 30 days for the change of address to be processed.

RE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates who fail the examination must submit a new application with the required fee by the final filing date.

APPENDIX A - BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE**SECTIONS 123 AND 496**

§ 123. It is a misdemeanor for any person to engage in any conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of an examination, including, but not limited to:

(a) Conduct which violates the security of the examination materials; removing from the examination room any examination materials without authorization; the unauthorized reproduction by any means of any portion of the actual licensing examination; aiding by any means the unauthorized reproduction of any portion of the actual licensing examination; paying or using professional or paid examination-takers for the purpose of reconstructing any portion of the licensing examination; obtaining examination questions or other examination material, except by specific authorization either before, during, or after an examination; or using or purporting to use any examination questions or materials which were improperly removed or taken from any examination for the purpose of instructing or preparing any applicant for examination; or selling, distributing, buying, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a future, current, or previously administered licensing examination.

(b) Communicating with any other examinee during the administration of a licensing examination; copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee; having in one's possession during the administration of the licensing examination any books, equipment, notes, written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed, or otherwise authorized to be in one's possession during the examination; or impersonating any examinee or having an impersonator take the licensing examination on one's behalf.

Nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution under the authority provided for in any other provision of law.

In addition to any other penalties, a person found guilty of violating this section, shall be liable for the actual damages sustained by the agency administering the examination not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the costs of litigation.

(c) If any provision of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

§ 496. A board may deny, suspend, revoke, or otherwise restrict a license on the ground that an applicant or licensee has violated Section 123 pertaining to subversion of licensing examinations.